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COMMUNICATION OF CROSS-BORDER MINORITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Enache TUȘA

“Ovidius” University of Constanta (Romania)

Abstract

This is an analysis of how cross-border minorities manage to communicate and provide humanitarian support to those who are in major difficulties in the context of the war in Ukraine. Therefore, in this paper, I propose an analysis of the way conflicts arise and unfold in a multicultural society, through the lens of the problems related to such a society, namely the issue of minorities and the idea of tolerance, and let's show how these conflicts are managed internationally.

Keywords: Ukraine, multicultural society, communication, minorities

1. INTRODUCTION

After the “progressive disintegration” of the Soviet Union, in some cases, the conflicts that arose were formally resolved, while in the independent member republics, new conflicts emerged. [1] In about 80% of the cases analysed, it was found, in the same study, that the ethnic group that claims something lives under conditions of discrimination (be it ethnic, economic, or political) having historical roots or more recent origins. In the remaining cases, representing 20%, the triggers of ethnic conflicts are a series of disputed territories, the struggle for supremacy, and the struggle for resource control. [2]

After 1960, the number of ethnocultural groups dramatically increased, mobilizing for the purpose of official recognition of their specificities and related rights so that their identity and culture are preserved. It is precisely the fact that these groups, which make up today's multicultural societies, have certain claims to which a political will is opposed, that, in the opinion of most analysts of the phenomenon, represents the source of the most serious internal and interstate conflicts of an ethnic nature since the Second World War. [3]

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2. COMMUNICATIONS IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Multicultural societies have been marked throughout history by various ethnic conflicts, as well as secessionist processes, characteristic especially in the late 20th century, all of which are fueled primarily by the collective identities of different ethnicities. However, ethnicity does not necessarily cause conflicts to arise, as the desire to create one's own state on the territory it occupies is not characteristic of all ethnic groups, some opting to increase autonomy within the state within which it coexists, without challenging its legitimacy. [4] Therefore, some authors suggest a classification of conflicts according to the interests of the actors involved, thus delineating a category of conflicts related to tangible material interests. These disputes over territorial boundaries, national government control, or economic disputes, and a second category of conflicts "of less tangible ideas", namely ideological, ethnic, and religious conflicts.

Despite this theoretical delimitation, in practice, the various types of conflicts do not exclude each other and even overlap to a large extent. A good example of this is the conflict between Russia and Ukraine after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the occupation of Crimea in 2014, and the invasion in March 2022. [5]

Ted Robert Gurr started a complex research project, *Minorities at Risk*, in 1988. During this research conducted at the University of Maryland in the USA and updated regularly, 233 ethnocultural groups were identified worldwide, significant in size and subject to discrimination, that is, potential sources of ethnic conflict. According to the results of the analysis initiated by Ted Robert Gurr, 74 of these groups were concentrated in Africa, 43 in Asia, 32 in the countries of the former Soviet bloc, 31 in the Near East, 29 in South America, and 24 in Western countries with a developed democracy. [6]

An important factor in the emergence of ethnic conflicts is the fact that in international relations the sovereignty of states and the inviolability of borders are immutable principles to be respected. Because of this, specialists are often unable to make known the current tension between states and various subnational ethnic identities and, consequently, to develop practical solutions to this challenge of contemporary international politics.

The spread of egalitarian ideology also contributed to the multiplication of situations of ethnopolitical conflict. The promotion of the norms of equality and equity has had the effect of the generalized refusal of ethnic subordination, as well as the spread of the tendency to compare the situation of their own ethnic

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group with the standards of neighboring groups. This resulted in better awareness of the disadvantages of their own group, which could easily lead to a conflict.

The present state system, originating in European feudalism and the colonial system, also plays an important role, providing a favorable framework in which ethnopolitical conflicts arise and unfold, while the continued concern for the seizure of state control and the exclusion of all rivals often lies at the root of ethnic conflict. [6]

In a context where “globalization and multiculturalism raise many problems” [7], the theory of modernization argues that the phenomenon of ethnic conflict is the collateral product of modernization. The first to establish this in a study published in September 1961 was Karl W. Deutsch, who argues that “*the process of social mobilization – the transition of an overwhelming majority of a country’s population from a traditional form of life to a modern one – is directly linked to ethnic conflict.*” [8]

In his view, ethnic conflict is the product of competition between the rate of social mobilization and the rate of assimilation, the proportion of the population segment mobilized but not yet similar being the “first raw indicator” of group conflict. More recent and more elaborate versions of the theory of modernization emphasise that individuals involved in the economic and political processes of modernization are more prone to conflict not because of their differences but because they become more and more alike, they want the same things, they have identical ambitions, they pursue similar goals.

Theories that emphasise economic interests are part of the category of materialistic explanations, which have several variants, some equating the threat of ethnic conflicts with manipulation of elites in order to divert the attention of public opinion from the real opponent, others claim that ethnicity is a faithful expression of group economic interests, while others emphasize the role of group economic interests or the role of incompatible economic interests of "entrepreneurial minorities" and "host society".[3]

J. S. Furnivall believes that a society characterized by cultural pluralism lacks shared values, cultural differences are dominant, and contacts between members of different communities are reduced to economic relations and exchanges. Thus, the political system can be maintained only by force, which is why these highly unstable types of societies have a high potential for conflict. It was also

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stated that in the context of modernity, ethnic, cultural, or religious pluralism has more and more consequences manifested especially in the sphere of values, concepts about the world and life, and religious and ethical practices. [9]

Viewed from a comparative perspective, the above-mentioned theories are based on contradictory concepts the deficiencies of these theories are, however, only valuable indicators for a comprehensive and comprehensive theory of ethnic conflict. A theory as comprehensive as possible should be based on explaining the link between the interests of the masses and those of the elites, it should also exemplify the role that community anguish plays in the relief of conflicts, as well as the role of other elements of group psychology. It is also necessary to elucidate the functions and importance of symbolic controversies in the evolution of ethnopolitical conflicts.

3. PARTICULARITIES OF CROSS-BORDER MINORITIES

Joseph Nye analyses as sources of potential conflict the mechanisms of collective psychology to compare the state of rival communities, along with the policies of domination and the mechanisms for legitimizing group ideology, he studies in depth the logic of secession. This rivalry, which often leads to opposite consequences, devotes extensive chapters to electoral systems where ethnic parties also run, and assesses the chances of multi-ethnic coalitions and alliances and parties. Therefore, representatives of several communities follow the paradigms of militarization of ethno-political conflicts, while also assessing the effects of military intervention in the case of conflicts already in the stage of armed violence. [10]

Ethnonationalist communities are relatively large regional ethnic groups living in a country with a majority population and differing from this majority population by way of life or particular cultural features.

The political movements of these groups are supported by the hope of achieving a higher degree of autonomy or independence. Usually, these groups, which Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff call ethno-nationalist communities, were themselves at some point in the course of history “founding nations of the state” or had broad autonomy within a state structure. They are remembered by the authors, Corsican or Breton, although they lost their autonomous status centuries ago, they keep alive this idea of regaining autonomy, an idea that still motivates their political movements today. The Russians and Ukrainians are also mentioned in their analysis of the justification of the founding nation of *Kievan*

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Rus. These types of communities are or may be parties to prolonged ethnopolitical conflicts, such as independence or secession movements. [11]

One such case is the complicated relationship between independent Ukraine after 1991 and the Russian Federation which manifests claims of hegemony and domination over Ukraine even after the recognition of independence by the actual heir of the USSR. There was a territorial dispute over the *Crimean Peninsula* between the two new states and, in addition, there was an ethnic conflict between ethnic Russians living in Ukraine and ethnic Ukrainians in Russia, as well as religious differences between the Russian and Ukrainian forms of Christianity. [11]

The development of ethnic conflicts comes amid the end of the Cold War, as the end of bipolar disorder has led to the emergence of non-state actors that accentuate fragmentation trends at the global, regional, or local levels. Such trends were particularly noticeable in federations of states such as Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia, but also in some unitary states where groups characterized by ethnic differences coexisted.

Therefore, in the context created by the end of the Cold War, we witnessed the shaping of a complex Yugoslav crisis, strongly marked by the conflict between Serbs and Croats. Some of the hardest battles took place between Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Bosnian Muslims, the most ethnically and religiously heterogeneous of the former Yugoslav republics. In the summer of 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia, and ethnic Serbs and Croats began fighting in Croatia, leading to the UN imposing an arms embargo on all former Yugoslav republics. [10]

On the basis of this model of dissolution, the former Soviet Union was dissolved, a phenomenon that led to a series of geopolitical events and the reversion of former Union republics. The process itself was violent and generated wars such as those in Chechnya, Georgia, and recently Ukraine. The reasons for the outbreak of these conflicts were also due to poor communication and the antagonism of messages between cross-border communities, which increased tension.

Cultural-religious antagonisms can pose risks to global geopolitical balance. There are also radical ethnic groups that fight for their religious rights, sometimes imposing themselves by force. Contemporary historians Max Ginger and Aaron Wildavsky identify regions with great potential for future ethnic-

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religious conflicts in their 1993 paper „The Real World Order: Zones of Peace, Zones of Turmoil”. [12]

It follows that 15% of the world’s population lives in “peace zones” and the remaining 85% is in turbulent areas, where the possibility of conflict is high. The same authors conclude that 30% of conflicts are religious in nature. Without dividing world security, American author Karl P. Magyar projected the conflicts in Northern Ireland, the Arab-Israeli dispute, and the Sudanese problem on a religious basis. [13] At the European level, statistics on the situation of minorities, including in the Balkan area, show that geographically reduced spaces, such as Bosnia and Kosovo, have become genuine universal reference systems for political analysts of ethnic minorities and universal human rights. [13] This kind of approach for researchers is based on the type of communication of cross-border minorities no matter where they are.

The need for a universal system of protection of minority rights has made some regulations in this area integrated into the general system of protection of human rights. Specifically, the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establish the universal system of protection of human rights, a context in which the rights of ethnic minorities are addressed in a general manner, within a broader framework of equality of rights, without differences in race, gender, language, religion or origin. One of the key treaties within the Universal System of Human Rights is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that "in States where there are ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, Persons belonging to these minorities shall not be deprived of the right to have, in common with the other members of their group, their own cultural life, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language". [14]

At present, the issue of the protection of national minorities has become one of the Council of Europe's major priorities, which has laid the foundations for mechanisms aimed at monitoring and cooperation, which has led to some progress in the area of minority protection across Europe. [15] Even though the issue of minorities has been one of the fundamental concerns of the Council of Europe since the beginning of its activities, it is only with the collapse of the communist regimes and Actions of interethnic violence and hostility in areas such as the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union clearly demonstrate that the protection of national minorities is not only a component of human rights protection but also a crucial element for stability, security, and peace. Consequently, among the states constantly concerned about this issue, the

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situation of minorities is clarified by means of certain specific constitutional provisions.

In this context, the question arises as to the extent to which communication between minorities and cross-border communities can be achieved in order to ensure peace and social balance. The rise of extremist nationalism in some regions of Europe that a much greater concern can be observed in this matter. Even if this concern is an old one, initially arising for purely religious reasons, at present “ensuring stability, security and cooperation between national states means, in fact, protecting from possible conflicts from within, so that we can create that solid Europe in the event of an external conflict”. [15]

The Republic of Moldova also emphasizes a series of regulations in the field, clearly outlined in the text of the Constitution that was adopted on July 28, 1994, coming into force on August 27, the same year. Thus, it is recognized that “respect and protection of the person is a primary duty of the state”, all citizens of the Republic of Moldova being considered “equal before the law and public authorities, without distinction of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, etc. sex, opinion, political affiliation, wealth or social origin.” [16]

Thus, among countries where the presence of minorities is a reality, the general tendency to create legal conditions for the tolerance of those minorities is observed. In particular, members of minority communities “are considered, first, citizens of that State, with the same rights and obligations as members of the majority and then, as members of the minority, are allowed to participate in its life, to create voluntary associations, economic enterprises, cultural, educational and religious institutions”. [17]

The regulatory mechanisms and negotiation techniques for conflicts have been designed and developed both globally and regionally. At the global level, the United Nations is drawing up a number of clear regulations on conflict resolution, the only method of conflict management recommended by the UN based on negotiation.

The UN’s main goal is to provide a global institutional structure through which states can resolve their conflicts, with less emphasis on the use of force. The Charter of the United Nations is based on the principles that “states are equal under international law; that states have full sovereignty over their own affairs;” that states should fulfill their internal obligations – such as respect for diplomatic

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privileges, abstention from aggression and compliance with the conditions of the treaties they sign.” [18]

4. CONCLUSIONS

After 1960, the number of ethnocultural groups increased dramatically, mobilizing for the purpose of official recognition of their specific characteristics and related rights so that their identity and culture are preserved. The fact that these groups, which make up today’s multicultural societies, have certain claims to which a political will is opposed, represents, as we have tried to show in our work, the source of the most serious internal and interstate conflicts of an ethnic and cultural-religious nature since the Second World War. In this development, different ways of communicating between communities can balance the cross-border geopolitical space and contribute to inter-state cooperation and collaboration.

Ethnic and cultural-religious antagonisms can, therefore, pose risks to global security. [19]. There are radical ethnic groups that fight for their religious rights, sometimes imposing themselves by force. As we have previously shown, about 15% of the world’s population lives in “peace zones,” and the remaining 85% is in turbulent areas, where the possibility of conflict is high. It is a reality that has shown us in recent decades that mediation, communication, and collaboration through negotiations and diplomacy are necessary. We believe that many of the conflicts that have erupted in Southeast Europe over the past decades could have been prevented through communication and mutual knowledge of the needs of each community itself. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation proved (once again) that in the case of conflicts, all parties involved in the conflict lose enormously and irretrievably. We have been able to observe, despite the war, that through communication people can help each other and find their balance, as happened with cross-border minorities in areas of armed conflict. [19]

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